

NOTHING TO KEEP DARK.

The Letter of Senator Ingalls to the District Commissioners Explained.

He Requested That One Communication Should be Considered Confidential.

Because of This the Commissioners Have Kept Their Minutes Book Shut All Winter.

The "Star" Replies to the Commissioners' Letter in Vigorous Style.

"I was very much surprised," said Senator Ingalls last evening to a REPUBLICAN reporter who called upon him, "to see my name mentioned in a conspicuous manner in THE REPUBLICAN, as a man who wanted to keep some things dark. Once when I wrote to the commissioners for some information concerning a pending matter in which the public had no interest, except in the ultimate, the information appeared in full in the newspapers before the committee received it. I then wrote a note to the commissioners requesting that such information when asked for by the committee be withheld from the press until acted upon, or at least until the committee received it. If I chose to give it to the press that was another matter. The information was intended for my use in making up my decision upon a certain thing. I asked that it should not be made public until acted upon, as I had the right to do. I am surprised that such a request could have been construed into an intimation that I wanted anything about the commissioners' office or any of their books or records kept from the public. I have nothing to do with the business of the commissioners, and I have no desire to keep anything dark. As a matter of fact, I have no authority over them, and they are not at all obliged to consider my request as binding upon them.

"Don't you think," asked the reporter, "that the newspaper reporters would have respected your wishes in such matters just as readily as the committee?"

"Certainly," do. My experience with newspaper men convinces me that they can be trusted. I have frequently given them information which I requested should not be published until I had been acted upon, and I have never seen one of them to betray my confidence.

"The question has been and will be asked, Senator, what communication upon public matters there can be between you and the commissioners which the public haven't the right to know all about. I wish you would answer it."

"I do not now remember what that particular case was, but it was information of a confidential nature the publication of which would defeat all action upon the matter. My reason for this is that I did not want to know whether the public had the right to know it or not. I don't think so. The public has the undoubted right to know the results, the decisions reached, and it does. But this information is of a private character. It isn't a question of right, but a question of whether legislation shall be defeated by some petty antagonisms which will overshadow the main question."

"Will you give an illustration?"

"The question of the location of railroad tracks and depots in the city. The people on Capitol Hill want the Baltimore and Ohio depot removed, the lands graded off, and the streets continued through as they were intended to be. The people in the southwest part of the city want the railroad tracks on their streets and avenues. The people about Sixth street want the tracks taken from that street. There is a proposition pending to make a union depot on Maryland avenue, and to locate the tracks as to suit the people in the southwest. Now, suppose, just for an illustration, that in getting our information in order to arrive at an intelligent decision, some of it was of such a nature as to arouse antagonisms and excite enmities among a few people with differing views upon the subject, and that it was likely to grow up a fight which would distract all attention from the main object, defeat all legislation upon the matter, and leave things just as they are."

"Isn't this your position, then, that it is wiser to get down to work which is of public benefit, but in such cases it would not be wise, it would not be practical statesmanship, by making public things in which the great people, except some few persons, have not the slightest interest, to force down upon a measure in which all are interested?"

"How often does it happen that there are communications of a nature which it would not be expedient to publish?"

"Very rarely."

"You remember when your note to the commissioners concerning the information which you wished to have considered confidential was written?"

"Not exactly, but it was early in the winter."

"Have you received from them or sent to them communications of a like nature since that time?"

"I do not remember that a single communication has passed between the commissioners and myself since that time which might not, with perfect propriety, have been given to the press. But I have nothing to say regarding the action of the commissioners, for I don't know anything about it. I certainly never requested that any other matter than communications to me personally of such a nature as I have said should be kept from the public. I had no desire to do so, nor any right, for I have nothing whatever to do with the business of their office, their records, or their books. It isn't exactly right to parade me as a man who wants to keep things dark, when you know that every other newspaper man who comes to me or to any committee room for information knows that I am always willing to give the fullest information I can."

The senator was assured that it was only on the authority of the district commissioners that he had been represented as in favor of secrecy. Any other intimation would be met with a prompt denial from many reporters who were indebted to him for information.

PRESS COMMENTS.

From the letter of the district commissioners to the Star it seems that the current idea that there is any difficulty in getting access to the proceedings at the district offices is altogether a misapprehension. With the proper exceptions that the press and the public are refused admission to the regular meetings of the board, because the commissioners choose to regard their business sessions in the light of secret cabinet consultations, are shut out from the special meetings with delegations of citizens because the visitors request, secret, and are denied access to the records—letters, books containing all the official correspondence, because the chairman of the senate district committee objects to publicity of communications between the commissioners and his committee—with these slight exceptions everything about the district offices is open and accessible to an unlimited extent. But the reporters do not seem to appreciate the facilities afforded them for getting information at the district offices. Some time ago when they found the district doors slammed somewhat unceremoniously in their faces, the following minute made by one of them at the time shows the ground upon which the restrictions were then based:

"Dr. Tindall said that Commissioner Edmonds

had told him that it was desirable that there should be some different method of giving out district news, that Dr. Tindall might not get the news at different hours in the day, and the reporters could not at these definite hours and places get the news, except by the courtesy of Commissioner Edmonds. He did not like the books and papers of the office handed over to the reporters of the local press, and he like to have the district news office as much as it is interfered with the clerks' duties."

The reporters also found themselves confronted in their search for information by the fact of the COMMISSIONERS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, Dec. 22, 1882—Ordered, That all officers and employees of the district government are prohibited from furnishing any information relating to the affairs of the district unless the same be communicated through the commissioners or their clerks, by call card and regulations, provided, That this order shall not prohibit news being given to the press on matters of public interest and concern when duly authorized by the commissioners.

On approaching the quarters for the promulgation of the "daily authorized" public information they again struck a "No Thoroughfare" barrier in the printed placard, "The Commissioners are in Private Session, and usually attend the commissioners' door, which, by the way, is provided with an excellent spring lock."

Altogether, the reporters got a little discouraged. They felt as if they were not wanted about the district offices. It will be gratifying to them, no doubt, to find from the commissioners' letter that it was all a misapprehension, and that they were as welcome as the day. We do not think the commissioners will have cause to regret giving the press a free run to the district offices. The Washington reporters are generally trustworthy, and can be relied upon not to abuse any privileges given them by publishing matters prematurely, or that they are requested not to publish.

As the house has made no unjustifiable attacks, "holding up the police force of the district as criminal or incompetent, or stigmatizing the citizens as unusually addicted to the vice of intemperance, and its executive authorities as regardless of the interests entrusted to their management," it has nothing to say to the remarks of the commissioners in that connection beyond suggesting that if any paper has signed in that way the complaint should be addressed to the offender. As the house has made no unjustifiable attacks, "holding up the police force of the district as criminal or incompetent, or stigmatizing the citizens as unusually addicted to the vice of intemperance, and its executive authorities as regardless of the interests entrusted to their management," it has nothing to say to the remarks of the commissioners in that connection beyond suggesting that if any paper has signed in that way the complaint should be addressed to the offender.

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POLITICAL NOTES.

When he was last nominated Mr. Tilden was as straight-out for tariff revision as Mr. Carlisle. "Was he a hypocrite?" asked a correspondent, "or was he a hypocrite now?"—*Charleston (S. C.) News and Courier.*

It begins to look as if the political desperadoes were determined to give the election for president away this year as the only means and hopes of perpetrating the internal party law, in which is embodied the protection of the whisky monopoly.—*Nashville American.*

Mr. Morrison is the patron of the whisky bill as well as of the tariff bill. In the latter capacity he denounces all attempts on the part of the government to foster private interests. In the former capacity he demands government protection for private interests.—*Richmond Dispatch.*

In the old days the democratic party gained and held its power as an anti-protection party, and it made the cry of cheap living. It will never win control of the federal government on any other fight; for this is really the only thing worth fighting for.—*Richmond (N. C.) Chronicle.*

Mahoneism has been killed and buried so frequently that reference to it has become a waste with the bourbon editors, or they would permit it to rest as the truth of the matter is Mahoneism will not remain killed as long as it is a guarantee to the people that its life involves the death and destruction of poor old Virginia bourbonism.—*Richmond Whig.*

In bravely coming to the assistance of New York in this manner Gov. Cleveland at one and the same time renders his principle and the city under lasting obligations to him and renders his nomination to the presidency by the democrats out of the question. He has inflicted a mortal injury on Tammany, and without Tammany's frowns no democratic convention could nominate.—*Chicago Herald.*

As to the tariff the democrats are having a terrible collision between their principle and their policy. They are free traders as a class, but free trade means defeat; and it is a question whether they can stultify themselves for success. If they do, they will be defeated as dishonest men, whereas if they do not, they will be defeated as mistaken confidants. It remains to be seen whether they will risk their principle or their policy in the fight.—*Baltimore Herald.*

Mr. Morrison ingeniously defends the whisky extension bill by saying it is not special legislation in the interest of any body, but to relieve parties from special disabilities. The bill is a special measure, and Morrison will have to be turned out of the democratic party.—*Petersburg Times Appeal.*

Recently I have taken pains to get the feeling of men about Arthur, and my belief is that he is well approved of and liked. His quiet, conservative course has turned the suspicion which attended his accession to the right into a feeling of respect. The conservative classes are glad to let well enough alone. It will be a very strong man on the democratic side who can beat Arthur in Ohio. Perhaps you will say of me that it is rather conceited to express these decided views. But I am not a politician, and my judgment of the professional politician is that please take them from one who is unpartisan and who in truth is rather indifferent who wins.—*Ohio letter in New York Mail and Express.*

THE MOUNTAIN LABORED.

Report of the House Committee on Accounts on the Extra Month's Pay Matter.

On Saturday the house committee on accounts reported favorably the resolution offered last December by Mr. Geddes to pay house employees who came to work prior to Feb. 1, 1884, an extra month's pay.

The committee amended the resolution by providing that its benefits should not extend to employees who were appointed on or after Feb. 1, 1883. (The main effect of the amendment was to prevent Mr. Keifer's nephew, P. Gaines, from drawing a month's extra pay.)

In concluding their report the committee says, in regard to the controversy between ex-Speaker Keifer and Stenographer Tyson: "We have reviewed with great care the testimony submitted, and find that there are several conflicting statements as to minor points involved in the investigation, but from the analysis of the evidence upon the material points at issue, the following conclusions are reached:

"That the accounts performed no service during the vacation of congress. There were no committees of the house in session and no service could be rendered by either of the stenographers to committees.

"That the agreement as to Tyson's resignation, alleged by Gen. Keifer, to have existed from the date of Tyson's appointment was one which Tyson seems not to have understood, although it is fairly probable that the speaker had such an impression. It is also fairly probable, taking into consideration the testimony of Gen. Keifer, Mr. Tyson, Mr. Dawson, Mr. Clark, and Mr. Tyson, and the letter written by Gen. Keifer March 3, 1883, that this 'agreement' or 'understanding' if it existed, affected both Dawson and Tyson; that the negotiations between Dawson and Tyson, by which the former agreed to share his salary with the latter during the vacation of congress, were had with the knowledge and approval of Gen. Keifer. It is fair to state, however, that Gen. Keifer did not see the contract between Dawson and Tyson, and that the latter, after the vacation of congress, was paid no salary, and was in no wise a beneficiary thereof, except in so far as it saved him from the 'painful necessity' of ordering the removal of either Tyson or Dawson. That the resignation of C. W. Tyson was tendered because demanded by the speaker, and was, in fact, a resignation under protest."

To Resume Work.

With the expectation of the passage of the specific deficiency appropriation bill, the superintendent of the census has notified the clerical force of that bureau who are now furloughed to resume their duties this morning.

Personal.

\$4.50 BUYS A GLOVE FITTING MILK—A pair of gloves, price \$1.00. Address: J. H. KIDNEY, 710 1/2 St., next to E. M. KIDNEY.

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